

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Milford Colony Pipeline
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer, 2019
Proponent:	Lessee, Milford Colony
Location:	T18N R5W Section 18
County:	Lewis & Clark

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Lessee, Milford Colony, has submitted a proposal to place an improvement on their Montana State Trust Land grazing lease #3227 located Section 18, T18N R5W. The portion of the improvement located on Trust Land would include burying approximately 0.5-mile plastic pipeline running from an existing dam located in the NW1/4 of Section 18, to an existing cistern. Milford Colony would use a portable generator and pump, seasonally, at the dam to pump the water uphill to the cistern. The cistern feeds 3 other pipelines to 4 stock water tanks on State Lands. The lessee attempted to drill a well near the cistern, but it was dry. Summer of 2018 they hauled water from off-site to the cistern. The project would provide a dependable water source to a dry area and would water cattle from multiple pastures. Please see attached map.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Patrick Rennie, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Archaeologist
Montana Natural Heritage Program

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

No other agencies are known to have jurisdiction and permits on this section.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A: No action alternative. The proposed project would not be approved.

Alternative B: Action Alternative: Allow the proponent to install a buried pipeline and use a generator and pump seasonally while cattle are grazing this section.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

No fragile, compactable, or unstable soils are present. Construction of the project would entail burying approximately 0.5 mile of plastic pipe. Impacts to the soil would be minimized by use of a backhoe to place the pipe, disturbing up to 36" in width. The disturbed soil would be reseeded to maintain stability and minimize erosion. A clean, reliable water source at stock water tanks could minimize cattle use of the dam and decrease erosion potential.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

This section of State land has an existing cistern with three pipelines feeding 4 different stock water tanks. The water from the dam would be pumped up to the cistern to help distribute grazing utilization. The amount of water in the dam would be decreased with this use. There is a dam down the drainage from this dam in Section 13, which is also owned by Milford Colony. This drainage eventually flows north into Flat Creek in Section 12, which is also owned by Milford Colony. Any water quantity impacts would affect only the lessee/applicant. This project would have a positive effect on the area keeping cattle out of the bottoms of drainages, dams and surrounding wet areas.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

Air Quality would not be affected by this project.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

Cover, quantity, and quality of vegetative communities would not be significantly affected by this project due to the low amount of disturbance and use of low impact equipment. The pipeline would go through native rangeland and would be reseeded with a seed mix approved by DNRC.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The project would increase the availability of water for both livestock and wildlife. This upland site is located approximately 2 miles from the nearest naturally occurring surface water source, Flat Creek. Construction practices used in the placement of the pipeline and stock tank would be a one-time short duration occurrence to limit disturbance and will not lead to negative cumulative effects on wildlife. A wildlife escape ramp would be placed in the tank for birds and small mammals.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The Montana Natural Resource Information Service (NRIS) was queried for information regarding sensitive or endangered species located in the vicinity of the project area. No point observations of any species of concern are located in Section 24. However, within one mile of this section Grizzly Bears were sited in Sections 25 and 30, south of the State Land. Section 30 also had one sighting of a Sharp-tailed Grouse. The Grizzly Bear has a species occurrence polygon which overlaps in 6 acres of the NW¼NW¼ of Section 24. These polygons represent Recovery Zone Boundaries, demographic monitoring areas, and current know distribution. This project would have minimal impacts to both of these species.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archaeologist, was consulted regarding possible cultural resources inside the proposed project area. A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I search revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE. No additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed development. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are identified during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such

resources can be made. A field inspection by Land Use Specialist, Heidi Crum was conducted on June 7, 2019. No cultural resources were found in the vicinity of the proposed project.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The project is located in a rural part of Lewis & Clark County, approximately 2 miles north of Bowman's Corner (intersection of Highway 287 and Highway 200). The pipeline would be reseeded and will not alter aesthetics of the area.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No demands for additional environmental resources are required for this project. No cumulative effects to environmental resources should result from this project.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

No other studies, plans, or projects were identified during the scoping for this project.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

No health or safety risks are posed by the project.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

If approved, this project is designed to improve access to water to aid in improving livestock distribution and forage utilization.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The project will not create or eliminate permanent jobs in the area.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

No significant increase in tax revenues are expected as a result of this project.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.

No increased demand for government services are expected as a result of this project.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

No locally adopted environmental plans will be affected by this project.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

This project will not negatively alter recreational activities in the area. The improved access to upland water sources may increase use of the area by wildlife, enhancing recreational opportunities.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

No change in population will result from this project.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

No change in social structures and mores are expected as a result of this project.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The action affects water availability in a dry area. The increased water availability should improve both livestock distribution and wildlife use of the upland areas.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

This grazing lease (which has other tracts in addition to Section 18) provides approximately \$6583 annually to the Common Schools trust. Milford Colony also pays \$800 annually for an existing Land Use License for the infrastructure associated with the cistern, pipelines and tanks.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Heidi Crum	Date: 7/5/19
	Title: Land Use Specialist	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B: Action Alternative: Allow the proponent to install a buried pipeline and use a generator and pump seasonally while cattle are grazing this section.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

Installation of the stock water pipeline to disperse livestock over the lease and help better utilize the available forage. No long term or cumulative impacts are anticipated from the implementation of this proposal.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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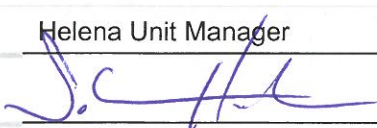
EIS

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More Detailed EA

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No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: John Huston
	Title: Helena Unit Manager
Signature:	 Date: 7/17/19

This aerial map displays a proposed pipeline route, indicated by a thick red line. The route begins at a red square in the upper left and extends towards the center. A red arrow points from the text 'Proposed pipeline route' to this starting point. The map is bounded by a dashed yellow line labeled 'Fence' at several points. A road, marked with a yellow house icon, runs diagonally across the upper portion. A road number '3227' is visible near the center. Two blue dashed lines, labeled 'Water Pipeline', branch off from the main route. Various symbols are scattered across the map, including blue circles with red 'X's, yellow circles with black symbols, and blue wavy line icons representing water features. A green dashed line also runs across the map, intersecting the proposed route.

